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Coordination, programme and other questions: mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system

Social and human rights questions: advancement of women

Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes of the United Nations system

Report of the Secretary-General**

Summary

The present report is submitted in response to Economic and Social Council resolution 2007/33, in which the Council requested the Secretary-General to submit to it a detailed report on the implementation of paragraph 4 of Council resolution 2006/36 and on progress made in the implementation of resolution 2007/33. Further to resolution 2006/9, the report also provides an assessment of the impact of inputs of the Commission on the Status of Women to discussions within the United Nations system. The report is based on responses received from entities of the United Nations system. It provides recommendations for consideration of the Council.

* E/2008/100.

** The compilation of inputs required to include the most current information delayed submission of the report.

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 2007/33, the Economic and Social Council requested the Secretary-General to submit to it a detailed report on the implementation of paragraph 4 of Council resolution 2006/36 and on progress made in the implementation of resolution 2007/33.

2. In paragraph 19 of its resolution 2006/9, the Council called upon the Secretary-General to include an assessment of the impact of the input of the Commission on the Status of Women to discussions within the United Nations system in his report to the Council on the review and appraisal of the system-wide implementation of its agreed conclusions 1997/2.

3. The present report responds to the above-mentioned mandates as follows: section I contains an introduction; section II responds to the mandates contained in resolution 2007/33; section III is devoted to capacity-building, as called for in resolution 2006/36; section IV provides an overview of the impact of the inputs of the Commission on the Status of Women to the work of the United Nations system, in accordance with resolution 2006/9; and section V contains conclusions and recommendations.

4. The report draws on information and data provided by 32 United Nations entities[1] in response to a questionnaire designed by the Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women and approved by the seventh session of the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality held from 19 to 21 February 2008.

II. Implementing Economic and Social Council resolution 2007/33

5. The 2005 World Summit called upon the United Nations system to strengthen its role in actively promoting the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the

[1] Department of Political Affairs, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, including Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, Department of Public Information, the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Department of Safety and Security, Economic and Social Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, United Nations Environment Programme, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Population Fund, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, United Nations Children's Fund, World Food Programme, United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute, United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, United Nations Office for Project Services, United Nations System Staff College, Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, International Labour Organization, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, World Health Organization, International Fund for Agricultural Development, United Nations Industrial Development Organization and International Atomic Energy Agency.

design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and social spheres, and undertook to strengthen the capabilities of the United Nations system (General Assembly resolution 60/1). In paragraphs 56 to 66 of its resolution 62/208 on the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, adopted in 2007, the General Assembly reiterated the call for the entities of the United Nations system, within their mandates, to mainstream a gender perspective and to pursue gender equality and the empowerment of women in their country programmes, planning instruments and sector-wide programmes, as well as to articulate specific country-level goals and targets in this field, in accordance with national development strategies.

6. In its resolution 2007/33, the Economic and Social Council recognized that gaps remain between policy and practice. Responses from United Nations entities to the questionnaire designed by the Office of the Special Adviser and evaluations of gender mainstreaming in some entities[2] identified, inter alia, the following major gaps in implementing gender mainstreaming: inconsistent leadership by senior management; weak monitoring, reporting and evaluation processes; underdeveloped accountability mechanisms; insufficient and under-resourced specialist expertise; limited capacity of staff; inadequate financial resources; inadequate institutional memory and capacity to share experiences and good practices; and insufficient inter-agency coordination.

7. United Nations entities have made efforts to establish institutional arrangements and take the necessary measures at policy, planning and implementation levels to bridge these gaps.

A. Strengthening synergy between policy and practice

8. Many entities have developed or strengthened entity-specific policies, strategies and action plans on gender equality. To support implementation, entities work systematically to incorporate gender perspectives into programming and to provide financial resources. Most entities use multi-year funding frameworks that require that gender perspectives be incorporated into work in all sectors, as well as strategic frameworks and programme budgets that require the mainstreaming of gender perspectives into subprogrammes and allocation of resources for implementation. For example, under the global and regional programmes of the strategic plan (2008-2011) of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), gender equality-related goals, outcomes, outputs and respective indicators are outlined. The strategic framework on gender equality and women's empowerment 2008-2011 was developed to provide an operational plan for the acceleration and improved achievement of those gender-related targets.

9. Other strategies for strengthening synergy between policy and practice include a quality assurance process for country programme documents and guidelines for

[2] United Nations Development Programme, *Evaluation of gender mainstreaming in UNDP* (2006); United Nations Population Fund, *UNFPA's Strategic Framework on gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment 2008-2011* (2007); UNICEF, "*Evaluation of gender policy implementation in UNICEF*" (E/ICEF/2008/CRP.2), 2008; Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, *Moving up the Food Chain: Lessons from Gender Mainstreaming at the World Food Programme* (August 2006).

gender mainstreaming in situation assessment and analysis exercises in the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); a quality assurance mechanism for decent work country programmes in the International Labour Organization (ILO); the use of a results-based management system to monitor progress in implementing the gender and development plan of action in the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO); and participatory assessments involving women and girl refugees in the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

B. Mainstreaming a gender perspective in country programmes

10. The common country assessment and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework provide an entry point for systematically implementing gender mainstreaming in country programmes. The 2007 common country assessment/United Nations Development Assistance Framework guidelines establish gender equality as one of the key principles of programming at the country level. National development strategies, national reports on the Millennium Development Goals and gender equality action plans should be the foundations of United Nations Development Assistance Framework implementation plans. The consolidated appeals process provides another effective mechanism for gender mainstreaming at the country level.

11. Preliminary analysis by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) of the 2007 resident coordinator reports indicated the use of the following processes and documents for mainstreaming gender perspectives in common/joint programming processes: poverty reduction strategy papers; national development plans or strategies; gender-specific reviews; national and/or regional dialogues; checklists, guidelines and workshops provided by gender theme groups; common country programme action plans; priority plans and peacebuilding fund frameworks in some post-conflict countries.

12. In strengthening the incorporation of gender perspectives into country programming, entities have undertaken a range of activities. UNICEF, for example, uses country programme documents and develops innovative tools, such as a gender-friendly policy and planning effort index to quantify key efforts to address gender issues (UNICEF-Zimbabwe) and a tool to analyse the gender sensitivity of cooperation programmes (UNICEF-Guatemala). The World Health Organization (WHO) is developing a tool to assess gender equality and human rights dimensions in its programmes and a new country cooperation strategy e-guide.

13. In cooperation with the regional commissions, the Office of the Special Adviser works with Governments to mainstream a gender perspective into implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) by building national capacity for implementation through a series of regional high-level policy dialogues on national action plans. The International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) fosters the use of participatory planning, research, and evaluation. The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) uses fact sheets on sectoral gender mainstreaming and guidelines to enhance the effectiveness of national machineries in gender mainstreaming, and the International Fund for Agricultural Development has developed a checklist of prerequisites for gender-sensitive design. The United Nations International Strategy

for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) will provide policy guidelines on mainstreaming gender perspectives into disaster risk reduction.

14. Overall, gender mainstreaming in country programming needs significant strengthening. The analysis of 2004-2006 resident coordinator reports indicated progress in the inclusion of gender equality analyses in the context of common country assessment/United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks[3] but continued inadequate (although improved) levels of inclusion of the outcomes of analyses in results-based frameworks and workplans. Inadequacies in implementation and accountability were also identified.

C. Results and indicators

15. Most entities reported using results-based management frameworks as one of the key actions in improving gender mainstreaming and reducing the gap between policy and practice. Entities increasingly set concrete targets and indicators, at country programme levels, to be monitored on a systematic basis.

16. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) developed a monitoring framework to review its workplan from a gender equality and women's empowerment perspective. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) on Gender Standby Capacity Project (GenCap) includes a monitoring and evaluation framework. The results-based management system of the World Food Programme (WFP) tracks gender-equality indicators. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and ESCWA are in the process of developing results-based management systems. INSTRAW developed a results-based module on assessment, monitoring and evaluation of security sector reform from a gender perspective.

17. At FAO, gender-sensitive indicators were formulated with participation of technical divisions as part of the recently approved gender and development plan of action. Each division will report biannually on gender-specific outputs based on those indicators. The gender mainstreaming strategy 2008-2009 of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) sets indicators for gender analysis and planning, capacity-building and communication, and includes six sector-specific, time-bound action plans with indicators, focusing on the impact of service delivery to refugees. The ILO action plan contains indicators, targets, baselines and accountability measures. At WHO, indicators measure the level of staff capacity for gender analysis, the extent to which management and planning processes integrate gender perspectives, and accountability by senior management.

18. Some entities increasingly work together with national partners to harmonize their indicators for gender mainstreaming at the country level. A UNDP programme, executed by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) in Cambodia, Kyrgyzstan and Morocco, generated replicable models for bringing

[3] A recent assessment indicated that 45 resident coordinator reports in 2006 highlighted United Nations country team efforts to support mainstreaming gender perspectives in national development processes, compared to 20 in 2005 and 17 in 2004.

together United Nations and national and donor partners in technical teams to identify indicators to track progress towards gender-equality goals.

D. Assessing progress and identifying gaps

19. Most entities continue to use entity-specific tools to assess progress and gaps. Project evaluations are also initiated by donors in some entities. For example, FAO uses periodic reports of technical divisions to assess progress on implementation. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and UNESCO assess gaps through analysis of workplans of individual sections; the former also reviews evaluations of emergency responses. The Department of Political Affairs uses the context of reporting to the Security Council to assess progress. The ILO Evaluation Unit is developing guidelines on gender-equality monitoring and evaluation.

20. UNICEF instituted a formal system of assessment and review of gender mainstreaming in country programmes through its Programme Policy and Procedure Manual. A comprehensive gender-equality study was carried out by UNRWA in the period 2003-2005, setting a baseline and assessing experiences in programming in five fields of operation. Gaps in progress are assessed through specific participatory needs assessments and evaluations. WFP conducts baseline and follow-up surveys and regular assessments of gender equality indicators by gender focal points or teams.

E. Sex-disaggregated data

21. Efforts in the area of sex-disaggregated data, gender-specific information and gender-sensitive indicators have assumed increased importance in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, common country assessments/United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks and poverty reduction strategy papers and in the context of the enhanced focus on accountability and results-based management.

22. Progress has been made by many entities in using sex-disaggregated data and gender-sensitive indicators in the production and dissemination of materials for policymakers and the general public. These include periodic reports on the current global situation[4] or reports on major trends and emerging issues. However, gaps remain in several critical areas, including, inter alia, violence against women, trafficking, migration, agriculture, HIV/AIDS and information and communication technologies.

23. Inter-agency initiatives, such as the Gender Info 2007 database produced by UNFPA and UNICEF in partnership with the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, have been undertaken to build the capacity, commitment and resources of both staff and partners.

[4] For example, see World Bank/IBRD Global Monitoring Report 2007, Confronting the challenges of gender equality and fragile states.

F. Institutional accountability mechanisms

24. Successful gender mainstreaming requires an institutionalized accountability system. Many entities have increased their efforts to integrate accountability for gender mainstreaming in their overall accountability frameworks, at both headquarters and country levels. These efforts include strengthening the focus on accountability in gender-equality policies and strategies, monitoring and evaluation and internal oversight mechanisms, and staff performance monitoring.

25. In operationalizing the United Nations system-wide policy on gender equality and empowerment of women and the strategy on gender mainstreaming, adopted by the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) and noted in the 2007 triennial comprehensive review (General Assembly resolution 62/208, para. 58), United Nations entities aim to establish common accountability frameworks at both headquarters and country levels:

(a) At the headquarters level, draft common accountability standards were developed by the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, in cooperation with the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality, in response to a request made by CEB in October 2006. The draft comprises 31 standards, sets a minimum level of performance with regard to gender equality and provides a results-based management framework to strengthen monitoring, reporting and evaluation.

(b) At the country level, the United Nations Development Group Task Team on Gender Equality, chaired by UNIFEM, has developed and tested performance indicators for gender equality and women's empowerment as a self-assessment tool for United Nations country teams. These indicators will assess performance within the context of common country programming across areas such as planning, programming, partnerships, decision-making, budgeting, United Nations country team capacity, monitoring and evaluation and quality control and accountability.

26. Effective gender mainstreaming requires that staff members be accountable for incorporating gender perspectives in their work. Senior management has overall responsibility and accountability for gender-equality results. In practice, however, lack of responsibility for gender mainstreaming among staff other than gender specialists, and the absence of consistent support and accountability mechanisms, remain serious challenges.

27. Individual entities have made efforts to strengthen the accountability of managers and staff. Most entities use workplans and performance appraisals to establish and monitor the accountability of staff. The Secretariat instituted criteria of "respect for diversity/gender" as part of the performance indicators for all staff. The compacts between heads of departments and offices with the Secretary-General include responsibility for gender equality. In addition, senior managers will be required to include objectives related to gender equality in their workplans.

28. The UNRWA accountability system for gender mainstreaming sets out the roles and responsibilities of senior management, programming and planning staff, and gender focal points. Gender-equality results will be included in job descriptions and all staff members will be evaluated through performance appraisals. FAO is adding gender expertise as a required qualification in vacancy announcements to ensure recruitment of gender-sensitive staff. Since 2007, UNHCR has had a

compulsory system of self-reporting for senior managers based on a set of simple, measurable and clear actions, including gender equality.

G. Financial and human resources

29. As indicated in the agreed conclusions adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women at its fifty-second session, under-resourcing of gender-equality activities persists throughout the entire United Nations system and in particular in the gender-specific entities, namely, the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, the Division for the Advancement of Women, UNIFEM and INSTRAW. In most entities, the implementation of gender mainstreaming has not been matched by sustained and predictable human and financial resources and this has limited the delivery of systematic support for gender equality at the national level. Inter-agency collaboration, which plays a key role in strengthening coherence in policy development, programming and capacity development, remains underfunded.

30. The ability of the United Nations system to accurately assess resource allocation and expenditure on the promotion of gender equality is limited by the existing financial management systems. Constraints include incomplete data, inadequate coding and lack of systematic reporting. While targeted interventions on women's empowerment can be more systematically tracked, the lack of common criteria on gender-mainstreaming activities also hinders accurate reporting across the system.

31. Several initiatives are being undertaken at the inter-agency level and by individual entities. A task force of the Inter-Agency Network was set up to harmonize tracking practices systemwide. UNDP initiated a pilot exercise using ATLAS software to track allocations and expenditures on the promotion of gender equality. UNFPA has also improved its resource tracking by modifying the ATLAS reporting system. ILO is making efforts to improve tracking of gender-related resources through its integrated resources information system.

32. Entities reported on the benefits of having the expertise of gender specialists, gender focal points and focal point networks. Gender specialists provide technical advice and support to United Nations country teams on gender mainstreaming in programme areas and, on request, to national partners to build national capacities.

33. The overall number of gender specialists at the headquarters, regional and country levels remains low. Because they are few in number and are required to cover a large number of countries and programme areas, gender specialists at the regional level often have limited effectiveness in providing advice, monitoring project implementation and following up.

34. At the country level, most entities have adopted a system of gender focal points. Entity-specific evaluations indicate that the focal-point systems need to be significantly strengthened. Most focal points are junior staff who have been assigned the gender-equality portfolio in addition to other responsibilities, and many of them have no gender-equality background. The functions and performance indicators of focal points should be clearly defined and matched with gender training and resource and time allocation.

35. In order to strengthen specialist resources at the national level, UNDP plans to establish gender focal teams at each of its offices, ideally under the leadership of senior management, such as the Deputy Resident Representative, and to introduce a gender-equality action plan for each office. UNHCR has replaced the individual focal-points system with multi-functional teams. ILO, UNFPA and UNICEF plan to strengthen their gender focal-point systems.

H. Collaboration through country teams

36. The analysis of resident coordinator annual reports for the period 2004-2006 conducted by the United Nations Development Group Task Team on Gender Equality demonstrated incremental improvements in the numbers of joint initiatives at the country level. In 2006, 53 resident coordinators reported on joint initiatives on gender equality, compared to 43 in 2004.

37. Through inter-agency cooperation at the country level, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and UNIFEM work together to promote joint United Nations country team reporting to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. This initiative has resulted in better and more coherent reporting.

38. By 2006, gender theme groups had been established in 61 countries in order to foster increased collaboration among entities at country level. These inter-agency groups, including extended groups that involve national partners, bilateral donors and other actors, are an increasingly important collaboration mechanism. In Nicaragua, for example, the Inter-Agency Gender Committee conducted a mapping of present and future interventions on gender equality and is coordinating financial support to the national programme on gender equality.

39. Department of Political Affairs field missions work closely with the gender theme groups at the country level, sharing information, planning joint activities and exchanging experience. All but one of the gender advisers in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations missions are part of the country-level gender theme groups. However, in a 2007 document entitled "Mapping exercise of priorities and workloads of gender advisers in United Nations integrated Missions" (p. 6), the Department of Peacekeeping Operations reported that only four of eight gender advisers of that Department (in Haiti, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Timor-Leste and Côte d'Ivoire) are invited to participate in United Nations country team meetings on a regular basis.

40. Collaboration within and between the United Nations country teams should be significantly strengthened, including through joint action with national partners and increased joint programming, monitoring and evaluation and pooling of resources.

I. Inter-agency collaboration

41. The United Nations system continued to strengthen inter-agency collaboration in different contexts, including, through the work of the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality, which provides a forum for the exchange of information on gender mainstreaming, collaboration on capacity-building and the development of methodologies and tools. The Network establishes task forces which work intersessionally on gender mainstreaming in a wide range of issues, including

the Millennium Development Goals; violence against women; peace and security; trade; water; evaluation, monitoring and reporting; capacity-building; climate change; and tracking gender-equality investments and expenditures. It reports to CEB and its high-level committees for programme and management, as appropriate.

42. The Network plays a catalytic role in supporting attention to gender perspectives in intergovernmental processes and has become an important actor in the implementation of intergovernmental decisions. It collaborates with preparatory working groups and organizes interactive side events during intergovernmental processes, such as the fifty-second session of the Commission on the Status of Women, the twelfth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the ongoing preparations for the midterm review of implementation of the Millennium Development Goals and the review of the Monterrey Consensus on financing for development. The Network collaborates with stakeholders outside the United Nations system in support of gender mainstreaming; these include the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development Development Assistance Committee Network on Gender Equality, with which it holds biennial workshops.

43. The Secretary-General's campaign to end violence against women and girls offers United Nations entities an opportunity to strengthen inter-agency collaboration in support of Member States in their efforts to combat violence against women. An inter-agency task force, chaired jointly by the Division for the Advancement of Women and UNFPA has initiated a joint programming exercise on eliminating violence against women in 10 pilot countries.

J. Gender balance

44. Gender equality requires the active participation of women in all areas, including in decision-making roles. As at 31 December 2006, the representation of women in the Professional and higher categories in the United Nations system remained virtually the same as the previous year, namely, 37.7 per cent in the Professional category and 24.7 per cent at the D-1 level and above. Within the resident coordinator system, the proportion of women increased from 21 per cent in 2004 to 32.5 per cent in 2006 (A/61/318, para. 7). In peace support missions, the overall representation of women was 30 per cent in 2006, compared to 27.5 per cent in 2004 (ibid., para. 51). Gender balance was achieved in two organizations: UNFPA and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research.

45. To achieve gender balance, United Nations entities pursue a variety of strategies:

(a) Setting specific targets for gender balance. UNESCO is committed to attaining gender parity at senior management levels (Director and above) by 2015. The WFP gender-equality policy (2003-2007) sets the target of 50/50 balance for all recruits. The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) has set the target of 50/50 gender balance at all levels. ILO, UNHCR and UNICEF have set targets of 50/50 for all Professional posts by 2010.

(b) Clearly defining responsibilities of senior managers for meeting targets. At UNICEF, accountability for reaching gender balance is clearly delineated between managers, the Division of Human Resources, the Special Adviser on

Gender and Diversity and the Gender Review Group, and implemented through policies, procedures, development tools and monitoring systems.

(c) Establishing mechanisms at the senior management level. In the Secretariat, human resources action plans are in use and a forward-looking gender-balance strategy and scorecard, to be reviewed by the Management Committee twice yearly, is under development. As part of its human resources strategy for 2008-2009, the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) established a system to monitor gender balance and take any necessary corrective actions.

(d) Including indicators in performance appraisals for managers. Since 2007, a WFP target on gender balance has been included in the performance appraisal of managers. At UNRWA, managers will be evaluated biannually on their goal completion through scorecards. At UNICEF, results-based management tools, such as scorecards, performance evaluation reports and surveys, will measure achievement against set targets.

(e) Establishing or improving work/life policies and policies on sexual harassment. Although such policies exist in many entities, a number of them reported some difficulties in applying them. Some entities, such as ILO, have developed specific indicators, targets and strategies on work/life policies, to respond to the identified constraints.

III. Action taken in implementation of paragraph 4 of Economic and Social Council resolution 2006/36

46. In paragraph 4 of its resolution 2006/36, the Council called upon the United Nations system to increase the awareness, knowledge, commitment and capacity of staff on gender mainstreaming through a number of concrete actions.

47. In the 2007 triennial comprehensive policy review (General Assembly resolution 62/208, paras. 35-47), the General Assembly called upon United Nations entities to enhance their support to national capacity development. Member States expect an acceleration of efforts in this area. In building gender-equality capacity at the national level, United Nations entities support governmental bodies, including national machineries for women, parliamentarians and civil society to: implement and monitor global norms and policies; facilitate national coordination; develop and disseminate gender-mainstreaming methodologies and tools; provide support for gender mainstreaming in sectoral policies and programming; and promote knowledge networking and sharing of good practices.

48. Despite increased attention to capacity-building and some promising initiatives, no entity has yet established an effective systematic capacity-building programme on gender equality. Entity-specific evaluations point to the need for enhanced gender expertise and overall capacity at both the headquarters and country levels, as well as support of capacity-building at the national level. Stronger efforts are needed to address identified constraints, including, inter alia, lack of conceptual clarity, inadequate resources, lack of leadership and accountability, the ad hoc nature of many training programmes, and weak follow-up.

49. The seventh session of Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality assessed the feasibility of establishing system-wide standards for capacity-building

and developing, based on existing good practices, a three-tiered gender-equality capacity-building programme, which would include basic online courses for all staff and training for senior managers.

A. Commitments to gender-mainstreaming training through policies and strategies

50. The majority of entities made specific commitments to gender-mainstreaming training, including by developing or revising specific strategies or action plans on training and integrating training on gender mainstreaming in their core competence development programmes.

51. For example, FAO has developed a strategy for in-house competency and skills development for gender mainstreaming. A number of entities, including the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), ESCWA, ILO, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute, UNIDO, the United Nations System Staff College (UNSSC), UNOPS and WFP are currently developing strategies for training in gender mainstreaming.

52. Many entities have integrated capacity-building on gender mainstreaming in their gender plans or strategies. Some examples are the International Atomic Energy Agency gender equality policy; the ILO action plan for gender equality 2008-2009; the UNDP gender equality strategy 2008-2011; the UNEP gender plan of action (2006); and the UNRWA gender mainstreaming strategy 2008-2009. UNESCO is developing an action plan for gender equality, 2008-2013, which will include capacity-building in gender mainstreaming.

53. At WHO, capacity-building is one of the priorities in its gender-mainstreaming strategy. In line with its age, gender, and diversity mainstreaming strategy, UNHCR builds staff capacity to mainstream age, gender and diversity throughout its programmes. UNFPA will develop an action plan for capacity-building in gender mainstreaming for all staff.

B. Moving towards mandatory training for all staff

54. Most entities reported that they had developed generic gender-mainstreaming training as well as training and resource materials for different categories of staff, including those in the administrative, budgetary, technical and sectoral fields. The new WFP gender policy will include a capacity development programme for all levels of staff, with a specific action plan and budget.

55. A growing number of entities have instituted regular mandatory gender-mainstreaming training. They include the Department of Political Affairs, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), UNEP, UNESCO, UNDP, UNICEF and UNOPS. Mandatory gender-mainstreaming training will be made available for all staff on CD-ROM in UNDP, UNICEF and UNIFEM. By the end of 2007, a total of 1,343 UNHCR and partner staff, including 97 facilitators, had been trained in gender mainstreaming.

56. Entities are also developing specific training programmes for United Nations country teams. The Country Programme Support Group, chaired by UNICEF and UNIFEM, developed an e-training module (available also on CD-ROM) for staff in all the country teams engaged in common country programme processes. The module was initiated by UNSSC in March 2008. INSTRAW also collaborates with UNSSC on training on gender equality for United Nations country teams.

57. There is a strong system-wide demand for more systematic and action-oriented training for all programme staff. Most entities continue to provide gender training on a voluntary or ad hoc basis, owing to lack of resources, expertise and/or support from senior management. Ad hoc training is not sufficient for developing capacity to utilize gender analysis systematically and effectively.

C. Integration of gender perspectives into other training courses

58. Numerous entities have made efforts to incorporate gender perspectives in staff development and training programmes in sector areas. Approximately half of all entities reported successful efforts to integrate gender perspectives into programme design and leadership development courses. However, they reported less success in integrating gender perspectives into training related to programme evaluation, results-based management and financial management.

59. Many entities reported efforts to incorporate gender perspectives in sectoral staff development and training programmes, including on poverty reduction, macroeconomics, sustainable development and humanitarian assistance. Other examples included the incorporation of gender mainstreaming in training for results-based budgeting at the field level in the Department of Political Affairs and the incorporation of gender perspectives into project design, monitoring and evaluation training at ILO. UNICEF has a gender-equality module in its core training on programme processes. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reported that its Emergency Field Coordination Training mainstreams gender equality across all modules.

D. Innovative forms of capacity-building

60. Entities increasingly strive to develop cost-effective and efficient capacity-building programmes, going beyond conventional training. They use fully tutored, self-learning programmes; participatory on-the-job training, one-on-one dialogues, briefings, collaborative development of materials, brown-bag sessions, executive briefings for senior and middle-level management, and electronic platforms and networks.

61. FAO, for example, organizes tailor-made participatory learning sessions for its technical divisions, and ESCWA organizes participatory working sessions. Many innovative programmes focus on the development of concrete, measurable, actions that the participants can agree to undertake upon completion of the programme. UNEP uses the "learning by doing approach", which is founded on a results-based management approach.

62. Electronic communications and networks, including the Internet, provide opportunities for innovation. More entities now use the Internet as a training

platform to conduct web-based courses on gender mainstreaming. ESCWA, WHO and UNESCO have developed e-learning training modules and materials to enhance staff capacity. The ILO International Training Centre provides online distance learning. UNFPA offers an innovative online package on Distance Learning on Population Issues, including a 40-hour, tutor-led, self-paced course on gender equality, which has, to date, been completed by close to 400 staff members. The Department for General Assembly and Conference Management has developed terminological databases on gender-equality issues.

63. Increasingly, entities collaborate on the development of capacity-building and share their experiences and good practice examples with other United Nations entities. UNFPA and UNIFEM are planning to develop a standardized virtual gender-responsive budget training course in English, French and Spanish. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, on behalf of the IASC Sub-working Group on Gender in Humanitarian Action, is cooperating with the non-governmental organization consortium InterAction, to develop inter-agency online CD-ROM training on gender-equality programming. FAO collaborates with other IASC members in workshops for gender advisers and focal points. INSTRAW has worked with the UNDP Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery to develop gender-mainstreaming capacity in crisis prevention and recovery activities. ESCWA collaborates with the Economic Commission for Europe in developing training materials.

E. Training of gender specialists and gender focal points

64. Entities reported on the development of training programmes and resource materials for gender specialists and focal points. WFP, ILO, UNEP and UNIDO provide customized training for gender specialists and OHCHR trains gender programme staff at headquarters and in the field as part of its strategy and skills on human rights monitoring and reporting.

65. The provision of training for gender specialists and focal points at the country level is very uneven. While some entities provide advanced training, in others, the training builds only basic skills. As a result, many focal points lack gender expertise and are unable to provide adequate advice and support to colleagues.[5]

F. Follow-up to capacity-building

66. Upon completion of training programmes, participants must be assisted in the application of the acquired knowledge and be given the opportunity to seek advice and share experiences. To achieve this, supportive structures and mechanisms, including help desks and arrangements for the dissemination of good practices, such as through databases, have been set up. ILO uses knowledge-sharing workshops, publication of good practices, a help desk and its web-based gender equality tool to share innovative practices. INSTRAW has developed methodology for identifying and assessing good practices. UNISDR provided a collection of good practices on

[5] UNDP, *Evaluation of gender mainstreaming in UNDP* (2006), p. 15, and UNICEF, "Evaluation of gender policy implementation in UNICEF" (E/ICEF/2008/CRP.12), p. 30.

gender equality and disaster risk reduction in 2007,[6] and a collection of good practices focused on disaster risk reduction and climate change from a gender perspective will be available in 2008.

67. UNICEF uses its routine reporting system, through annual country office and regional office reports, and institutional evaluations to identify and share good practices. WFP collects good practices through case studies, field visits, surveys, newsletters and reports. UNSSC uses follow-up activities and surveys to gauge the capacity of its learning interventions.

68. Despite the many commendable efforts by individual entities, robust institutionalized systems of follow-up to capacity-building have not yet been developed. Sharing of good practices remains inconsistent and often does not reach the country level.

G. Impact assessment and evaluation of capacity-building

69. Many entities reported on efforts to improve the assessment of the impact of capacity-building on gender mainstreaming. In some entities, specific evaluations are conducted: FAO, ILO, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and UNRWA conducted formal evaluations of their gender mainstreaming capacity-building activities; ILO has been using participatory gender audits, conducted as self-assessments on a voluntary basis, in 29 ILO field offices and headquarters units; WFP assesses impact through training reports, and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda uses a set of indicators to assess the impact of its training on gender mainstreaming.

70. Entities also assess the impact of capacity-building programmes through evidence of increased attention to gender perspectives in programme impact assessments and other reports. For example, ESCAP utilizes project impact assessments to gauge the extent of the application of capacity-building, and WFP makes assessments through standard progress reports from country offices. In UNEP, the Programme Appraisal Committee monitors gender mainstreaming into programme development, implementation and evaluation. UNESCO uses the systematic review and analysis of workplans from a gender-equality perspective.

H. Creation or expansion of electronic knowledge networks

71. The increased exchange of resources, including methodologies, tools and good practice examples, across the United Nations system is crucial for effective gender mainstreaming. Many databases and networks, both with thematic and regional focuses, have been established by individual entities or through inter-agency collaboration. Despite this, exchange of information on good practices between entities and country offices and with Member States is limited. Many existing resources are unknown to potential users and hence inadequately utilized.

72. The seventh session of the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality discussed electronic knowledge networks and databases of gender trainers and facilitators. The available databases of trainers and facilitators are not linked

[6] Gender perspective: working together for disaster risk reduction, good practices and lessons learned (www.unisdr.org/gender-good-practices).

and are not broadly utilized. For example, the GenCap project established by IASC is a gender-equality roster of advisers to be deployed to support humanitarian coordinators and humanitarian country teams. A UNDP gender-equality roster facilitates staff access to experts available for short to medium-term assignments. ILO maintains a database of equality gender experts which is available through a web-based tool. UNISDR is developing an online consultative community of core gender-equality professionals.

73. Mindful of the significant level of resources required for the development and maintenance of such networks, the Inter-agency Network decided to focus its attention on linking and expanding the existing networks and databases. National partners should be included in this initiative.

74. A number of other useful resources are available and utilized. The inter-agency website, WomenWatch, managed by the Division for the Advancement of Women of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, gives direct access to all the websites of Network members. It also provides a directory of resources on sectoral themes and issues to support capacity-building. INSTRAW has established a gender mainstreaming resource guide on its website[7] and will develop it as an interactive community of practice on gender mainstreaming. UNIFEM is developing and launching a global knowledge management online programming support site on violence against women.

75. The UNDP community of practice and knowledge management framework,[8] to be developed as part of its Gender Equality Strategy (2008-2011), contains a number of innovative elements. These include a global knowledge management advisory body, a baseline assessment of knowledge needs, a global portal on each focus area that is linked to regional and specialized sites, a system for the codification of good practices, and regional platforms linking and serving country offices.

76. The Division of Public Administration and Development Management of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs has developed the United Nations Public Administration Network, which includes gender equality issues. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has a network of gender focal points for information sharing, and administers an inter-agency online discussion forum.[9] ILO and UNESCO have extensive networks for gender mainstreaming, including at the country level. WFP instituted a network combining gender-mainstreaming resources with a practical advice-sharing system for lessons learned. UNHCR reported an innovative online protection tool called "RefWorld" containing gender equality resources.

I. Management leadership and support

77. Strong leadership is crucial to strengthening capacity-building on gender mainstreaming as a priority within entities. Senior managers should play a major role in the effective implementation of capacity-building initiatives and adequate follow-up processes. Many entities, including the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, the Department of Political Affairs, the International

[7] http://www.un-instraw.org/en/gender-mainstreaming.html.

[8] Empowered and equal: gender equality strategy 2008-2011, UNDP, paras. 108-110.

[9] http://ocha.unog.ch/ProCapOnline/index.aspx?module=viewpage&pageid=genforum.

Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO, UNICEF and UNRWA, provide training on gender mainstreaming for managers to build their capacity to lead gender-equality work. In UNRWA, for example, all managers will receive gender training during 2008 and will be held accountable for gender mainstreaming through biannual progress reports, using scorecards, to be submitted to the Commissioner-General. Another effective strategy for holding managers accountable for gender mainstreaming through capacity-building is to require, as an outcome of training processes, the preparation of a plan on gender mainstreaming.

78. At the country level, resident coordinators have an important role to play in ensuring that Millennium Development Goal number 3, on gender equality and empowerment of women, is properly addressed in national reporting on the Millennium Development Goals, in Common Country Assessment/United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks and national poverty-reduction strategies. They are also convenors of the gender theme groups at the country level. To be able to deliver on these mandates, resident coordinators should systematically build the capacities of country team staff. The UNDP guidance note on gender mainstreaming requires that resident coordinators take the lead in gender mainstreaming, oversee the dissemination of good practices, and ensure the inclusion of gender analysis and data disaggregated by sex.

79. A preliminary analysis of the 2007 resident coordinator reports showed that resident coordinators in some countries have facilitated training of country team staff and the harmonization of gender-mainstreaming materials and have overseen the development of tools and manuals. They have also facilitated the sharing and coordination of tools and methodologies with partners.

80. The responsibility of resident coordinators in promoting, monitoring and reporting on the capacity-building of country team staff should be significantly strengthened. In particular, this should include enhanced support for regular training needs assessments and capacity-building plans, identification and allocation of resources, and identification of resource persons and training materials.

81. The recent introduction of the United Nations Development Group's 180-degree resident coordinator performance appraisal, and the application of the performance indicators on gender equality, should enhance the accountability of resident coordinators for capacity-building in gender mainstreaming.

J. Role of human resources offices

82. Human resources offices should play an important role in implementing and funding training on gender mainstreaming, including through incorporating gender perspectives into general staff development programmes and utilizing e-learning facilities. However, entity responses indicate that, in more than 60 per cent of entities, primary responsibility for capacity development for gender mainstreaming lies with gender-equality units.

83. In other entities, human resources offices and training and planning units are responsible for training in gender mainstreaming. In the United Nations Secretariat, at UNESCO, UNSSC, and in many funds and programmes, human resources offices provide funding for training on gender mainstreaming. At ESCWA, FAO, the

International Criminal Tribunal on the Former Yugoslavia and UNEP, gender-equality units work together with human resources offices on developing and organizing gender-mainstreaming training. UNEP set up a gender and human resources team to address all gender-related human resources management and training concerns. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP and WHO reported that human resources offices are not responsible for advocating for gender-mainstreaming training, but play an essential role in its implementation through the core programme training.

IV. Implementation of Economic and Social Council resolution 2006/9

84. In its resolution 2006/9, the Council called upon the Secretary-General to report on the impact of inputs of the Commission on the Status of Women to discussions within the United Nations system. The agreed conclusions from the Commission's consideration of priority issues provide mandates for the work of the United Nations system, and the Commission's review of implementation of agreed conclusions provides further guidance. The recent discussions and outcomes in the Commission have impacted on the activities of entities in the system.

85. With regard to the agreed conclusions on the priority theme "The elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child" (2007) (E/2007/27), a number of entities scaled up their outreach activities, carried out research which highlighted the situation of marginalized adolescent girls and those living in vulnerable situations, and identified gaps in policies and strategies aimed at protecting the girl child from commercial sexual exploitation. The work of the Commission on the Status of Women on the girl child created momentum for the recent Inter-agency statement on the elimination of female genital mutilation co-sponsored by 10 United Nations agencies[10] to bring violence against girls to the fore and strengthen the commitments of United Nations entities to address female genital mutilation.

86. In relation to the review of the agreed conclusions on "Women's equal participation in conflict prevention, management and conflict resolution and in post-conflict peacebuilding" (2008), many entities reported on intensifying their advocacy and sensitization campaigns to increase women's participation, particularly at the country level, in collaboration with governments and civil society. They also used the related Commission on the Status of Women agreed conclusions (Council resolution 2004/12) to design research projects and develop capacity-building tools, as well as to establish links to other sectors.

87. The Commission's review of the theme "The role of men and boys in achieving gender equality" (2007) galvanized the work of many United Nations entities by offering new opportunities to partner with men's organizations fighting violence against women, target men and boys to raise awareness and change attitudes, and involve them in supporting HIV/AIDS care and treatment activities, such as home-based care and prevention of mother-to-child transmission.

[10] ECA, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHCR, OHCHR, UNICEF, UNIFEM and WHO.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

88. **United Nations entities need to further strengthen their efforts to fully implement the gender-mainstreaming strategy in support of the efforts of Member States at the national level for gender equality and empowerment of women. In most entities, gender-equality policies, strategies and action plans include concrete actions to develop capacity and improve accountability and monitoring and reporting on implementation of gender mainstreaming.**

89. **Entities use results-based management frameworks and multi-year funding frameworks, with targets and indicators, as a means to improve implementation and monitoring of progress in gender mainstreaming. Use of sex-disaggregated data has increased and an important inter-agency initiative, Gender Info, will also be useful for national partners.**

90. **Increased efforts have been made to incorporate attention to gender perspectives at the country programme level, using common country assessments/United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks, national reports on the Millennium Development Goals, national development strategies and poverty reduction strategy papers. Some progress at the level of analysis has been noted but further efforts are needed to ensure that the outcomes of analyses are translated into operational action.**

91. **A wide range of effective methodologies, tools and resources have been developed and applied by entities across the system. Increased inter-agency efforts are being made to ensure that these existing methodologies, tools and resources are more systematically shared among entities and with partners at the national level, including through electronic networks and databases.**

92. **Many entities have included accountability for gender mainstreaming in overall institutional accountability frameworks, monitoring, evaluation and oversight mechanisms, and staff performance appraisals. An inter-agency initiative will establish common accountability frameworks for both headquarters and field levels. In many entities, however, lack of responsibility for gender mainstreaming among staff and managers remains a challenge.**

93. **The under-resourcing of gender-equality activities, including for the gender-mainstreaming strategy, also remains a significant challenge, as underscored at the fifty-second session of the Commission on the Status of Women. The ability of the United Nations to assess resource allocation and expenditure is being addressed at both the entity-specific and inter-agency levels.**

94. **Entities reported on efforts made to enhance the capacities and resources of gender specialists at both the headquarters and country levels. However, the overall low number of gender specialists at all levels and the continued problems with the gender focal point systems at the country level constitute significant constraints to systematic and effective implementation of gender mainstreaming. Greater collaboration within and between United Nations country teams on gender specialists and resources is needed.**

95. **Inter-agency collaboration has increased and specific initiatives focus on: accountability mechanisms; sharing of experiences, good practices and resources; sex-disaggregated data and indicators; and capacity-building. Pilot**

projects to establish more coherent multi-entity approaches at the national level, including on violence against women, are in place. Despite this, many promising practices on gender mainstreaming are not shared and more systematic and effective inter-agency collaboration is required on experiences, lessons learned and good practices.

96. **In response to paragraph 4 of Council resolution 2006/36, most entities reported specific commitments made with regard to capacity-building for gender mainstreaming, including in overall capacity-building programmes. Mandatory training has been introduced in some entities and training for different themes and different categories of staff, including management levels, has also been established. Training for gender specialists and focal points has been provided by many entities, but progress in this area has been uneven.**

97. **Innovative forms of capacity-building have been introduced, including many electronic self-learning programmes. There is a need for strengthened programmes and follow-up at all levels and enhanced attention from senior management, including resident coordinators, to ensure an enabling environment for, and full impact of, capacity-building.**

98. **Many entities have made efforts to utilize the outcomes of the consideration and review of priority themes in the Commission on the Status of Women, as mandated in resolution 2006/9. Actions have been taken to increase advocacy, research and analysis, and operational work, through both entity-specific and inter-agency initiatives. Increased efforts are, however, needed to more systematically and effectively utilize the outcomes of the Commission across the system.**

99. **While promising initiatives have been taken by all entities and effective inter-agency collaboration has increased, overall progress on the implementation of gender mainstreaming has been uneven and persistent gaps and challenges remain in all areas.**

100. **To further strengthen the implementation of its agreed conclusions 1997/2 and its resolutions 2006/9, 2006/36 and 2007/33, the Council may wish to further encourage the United Nations entities to take the following actions:**

(a) **Further strengthen leadership on gender mainstreaming, through, inter alia, requiring more explicit attention to the strategy at the highest level; providing capacity-building for managers; and requiring senior management to report regularly on gender-equality results;**

(b) **Clearly establish the responsibilities of resident coordinators vis-à-vis gender mainstreaming at the country level, including ensuring attention to gender perspectives in all United Nations country team activities and supporting the work of gender theme groups;**

(c) **Clearly delineate, including through job descriptions and workplans, the responsibilities of all categories of staff for gender mainstreaming, and establish specific accountability mechanisms, including staff performance appraisals and compacts;**

(d) **Further strengthen the incorporation of gender mainstreaming in results-based management frameworks and multi-year funding frameworks;**

(e) Further strengthen monitoring, reporting and evaluation of progress and identification of persistent gaps, using common methods and indicators developed collaboratively to allow assessment of progress across the system;

(f) Substantially increase resources for gender-mainstreaming activities, including for capacity-building and inter-agency collaboration, and accelerate development of more effective ways to measure resource allocations and expenditure on gender equality;

(g) Further strengthen the role of gender specialists and focal points through creating enabling environments which provide clear mandates, capacity-building, sufficient resources, access to decision-making processes; and support to networking;

(h) Develop or strengthen joint United Nations country team action on gender mainstreaming, utilizing the performance indicators and other tools prepared by the United Nations Development Group Task Team on Gender Equality and increase the sharing of resources and good practices within and between country teams;

(i) Accelerate efforts to introduce mandatory staff training in all entities, including through the increased use of electronic means, and to provide training tailored for specific sectors and the needs of different categories of staff;

(j) Further strengthen inter-agency efforts to ensure a coherent approach to gender mainstreaming across the system, including through full operationalization of the system-wide policy and strategy on gender mainstreaming;

(k) Further strengthen knowledge management and exchange across the system, including through inter-agency efforts on electronic networks and databases;

(l) Ensure that gender perspectives are fully incorporated in the preparations for the midterm review of implementation of the Millennium Development Goals and the review of the Monterrey Consensus on financing for development.